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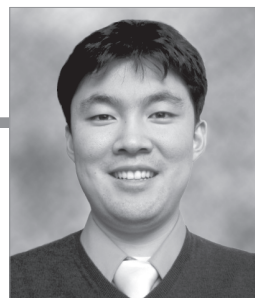
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## Case Study 1 - Larry Liu

*Northville High School, Northville, Michigan*



<b>Level</b>	Secondary School
<b>Subject</b>	Everyday Psychology (AP class)
<b>Mobile Phone Use</b>	Outside the classroom
<b>Mobile Phone Activities</b>	Text messaging, photo messaging, video messaging
<b>Web 2.0 Resources</b>	Facebook

### The Inspiration

Larry Liu is a secondary school English and AP psychology teacher in Michigan. Since autumn 2008, Liu has been using his students' mobile phones to document everyday psychology happenings outside of the classroom to connect with classroom learning.

During the 2008–09 school year, Liu taught an elective course, AP Psychology, for year eleven and twelve students. One of his learning goals was for his students to be able to connect the concepts and ideas about psychology discussed in class with their everyday life experiences. When he spoke with his students about his learning goals, the students suggested using their mobile phones to capture images and videos of their everyday life experiences and posting them on Facebook. Because almost all of his students were on Facebook daily, and they always had their mobile phones with them, Liu was willing to try using both mobile phones and Facebook. Liu did not begin his project with the intention of using student mobile phones in learning, but found that by allowing students to use their mobile phones, he was able to better meet his learning goals. Because both mobile phones and Facebook are banned in Liu's secondary school, this activity was conducted only as a homework assignment.

# School Demographics

## Mobile phone Culture

The following describes the mobile phone demographics in Liu’s classes.

**98%** of the students had mobile phones

Of the students who had mobile phones:

**92%** could send and receive text messages

**78%** could send photos

**62%** could send video

**75%** had Bluetooth

**47%** had GPS

## Social and Economic Data

**2229** students were enrolled in the school

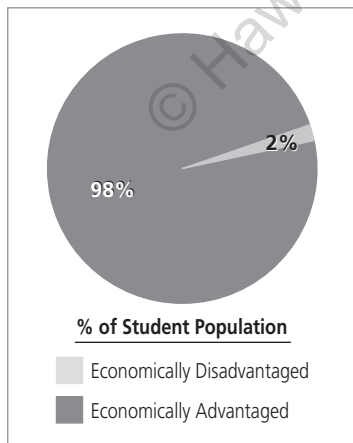
**85%** of students pass the statewide reading proficiency

**82%** of students pass the statewide maths proficiency

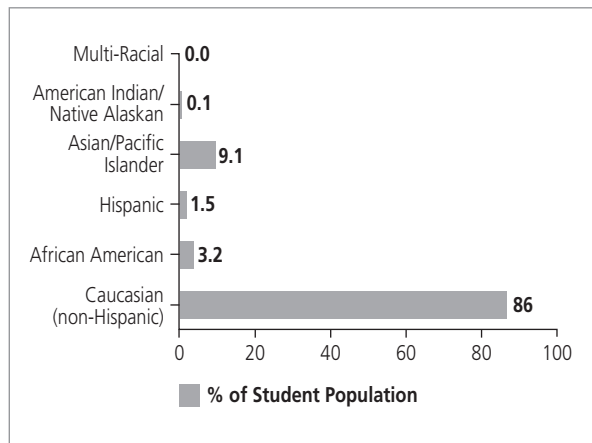
**53%** of adults in district have at least a bachelor’s degree

**95%** of adults in district have at least a secondary school diploma

**Economic Status**  
(from <http://schoolmatters.com>)



**Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**  
(from <http://schoolmatters.com>)



## Project Example

Although Liu already had his own personal Facebook account, he decided to set up a separate account just for connecting with his students. This allowed him some privacy with his personal account, and an opportunity to talk with his students about appropriate Facebook postings, images and profiles. Further, he cautioned the students that he was bound by law to report anything he saw on their Facebook pages that was illegal or inappropriate (such as underage drinking, drugs or sexual images). He gave them fair warning (and repeated this warning often) that his students would be wise to clean up their profiles. He found that this activity by itself was a great opportunity for students to begin to develop positive digital footprints in their social networking sites and for them to take down anything that could be misconstrued or viewed as negative.

Once Liu had set up his new class profile, he became “friends” with each of his students. Then, the students were ready to begin the homework assignment. The students were asked to take pictures or videos with their mobile phones when they encountered an everyday phenomenon that was linked to their class studies, and then send the media to their Facebook accounts with Liu’s name as a tag. This allowed the media to post in both the students’ accounts and Liu’s class account. Because almost all of his students were on Facebook much of the time, they would often comment on the images. Then, before school each day, Liu would select a few pieces of the media from the class Facebook site to share in class. He would download the images and videos and put them on a flash drive so they could be viewed in class. Figure 1.1 shows the class Facebook page along with instructions for the psychology project.

## School Policies

Mobile phones are not permitted at Liu’s school. Therefore, instead of trying to change policy, he took advantage of student mobile phone use outside of the classroom.

## Mobile phone Safety and Etiquette

To begin the project, Liu asked his students to clean up their Facebook profiles. He warned them often that he would report them if he viewed illegal or inappropriate images in their Facebook accounts. He took the time at the beginning of the project to educate his students on digital footprints and appropriate posting online.

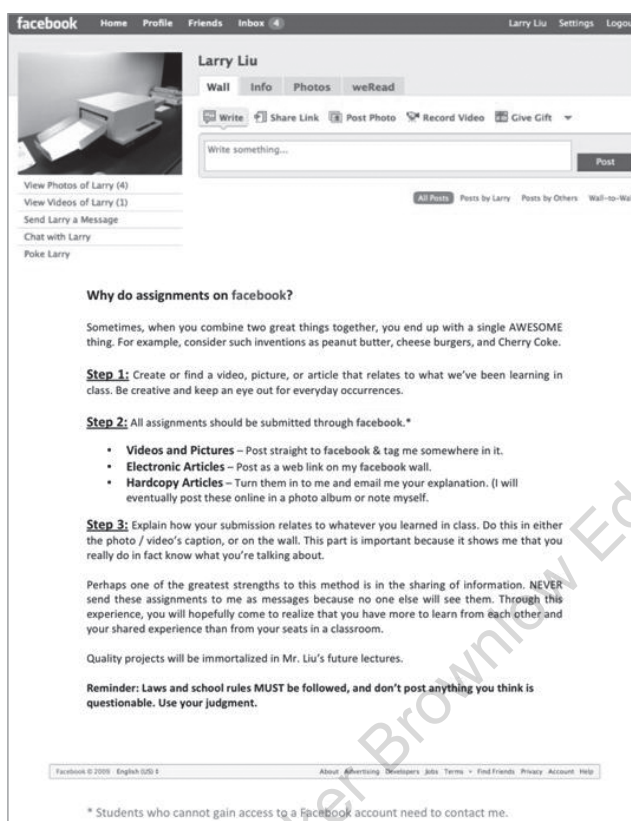


Figure 1.1 Liu's class Facebook page with project instructions

## Reactions

According to Liu, "Students have been rather receptive of the assignment. The first year it was debuted, students really jumped on board with it. Students get really excited about being able to share what they know because then they feel like they are a contributor to the class and on an equal level with me since they are teaching also. It's really great."

So far, Liu has found that parents' reactions have been favourable. Liu said, "Parents don't often comment on individual assignments, but the parents I've talked to at parent-teacher conferences have all been receptive of the idea of connecting school with life. Many are also quite pleased with the idea of teaching their kids how to responsibly use Facebook."



### Hints and Tips from Larry Liu

- One of the most important pieces of this assignment actually didn't involve a tightrope walk of the school rules. Because the assignment was set as homework, the administrators were fully on board with the assignment from day one.
- The key for this assignment is communication. Because there is no set due date until the end of the semester, I have had to constantly remind my students about the assignment. Additionally, assignment quality becomes an issue. Fortunately, so far I've been able to pull out a few excellent examples early on and establish a very high bar for the rest of the classes to follow. This self-policed quality control is, in my opinion, one of the great strengths of social networking and is a valuable lesson for students to learn.
- Take every opportunity to talk about responsible Facebook usage. They say it takes repetition to learn things. When my students are thinking about posting pictures of their wild and crazy weekend party, I want them to hear my voice in the backs of their heads and make good decisions.

## Unexpected Outcome

The project was such a great success for Liu that he has continued to use the Facebook account for class announcements, other class assignments, tutoring students, other school-related activities and staying in touch with past students.

## Future Plans

In the future, Liu would like to explore specific mobile phone assignments that are still being taught in a more traditional manner.

*See Chapter 4, Lesson Plan 11 for a tutorial on Mobile Facebook.*